

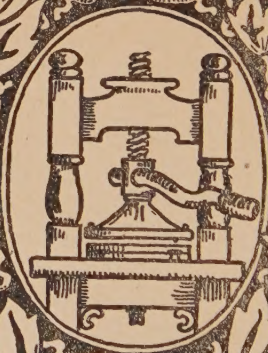
5⁰⁰

AN EVENING
WITH
BURNS

SHERWIN CODY

THE NOTCHED LIBRARY





THE
NUTSHELL
LIBRARY-
EX LIBRIS

An Evening with
BURNS



SHERWIN CODY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Made in the U. S. A.

COPYRIGHT, 1907
BY SHERWIN CODY

CONTENTS.

Burns, Life.....	9
------------------	---

LOVE SONGS.

My Nanie, O.....	37
On Cessnock's Banks.....	38
Mary Morison.....	40
Now Westlin Winds.....	41
Green Grow the Rashes, O.....	43
The Lament.....	44
Flow Gently, Sweet Afton.....	46
The Highland Lassie.....	48
A Prayer for Mary.....	49
Will ye go to the Indies, my May?.....	51
Tho' Cruel Fate.....	51
Written on the Blank Leaf (of a copy of his poems)	51
Bonie Doon.....	52
Where, braving angry winter's storms.....	53
My Peggy's Face.....	53
Banks of Devon.....	54
I love my Jean.....	55
I hae a wife of my ain.....	56
My Bonie Mary.....	56
To Mary in Heaven.....	56
The Blue-Eyed Lassie.....	59

Tibbie Dunbar.....	60
John Anderson my Jo.....	60
My heart's in the Highlands.....	61
The Bonie Wee Thing.....	61
Farewell to Nancy.....	62
My Nannie's Awa.....	63
Bonie Lesley.....	64
My Wife's a Winsome Wee Thing.....	65
Highland Mary.....	66
Duncan Gray.....	67
Galla Water.....	68
O, whistle, an' I'll come to ye, my lad.....	69
The Lovely Lass of Inverness.....	70
A Red, Red Rose.....	71
Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks.....	71
Hey for a Lass wi' a Tocher.....	72
O, wert thou in the cauld blast.....	73
Coming Through the Rye.....	74

OTHER SONGS.

M'Pherson's Farewell.....	75
Auld Lang Syne.....	76
O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut.....	77
The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman.....	78
Bannockburn	79
Contented wi' little.....	80
The Man's the Gowd for a' That.....	81

LONGER POEMS.

Holy Willie's Prayer.....	83
To a Mouse.....	87
Man Was Made to Mourn.....	89
The Cotter's Saturday Night.....	92
Address to the Deil.....	99
The Auld Farmer's Salutation to his Mare.....	104
To a Mountain Daisy.....	108
The Twa Dogs.....	110
Address to the Unco Guid.....	118
Tam o' Shanter.....	121



BURNS

Lord Tennyson, the aristocratic, reserved, professional poet, patiently polishing his verses through many years until at last he was rewarded by being made poet laureate and a peer; Longfellow, the Harvard professor, whose sweet, melodious, and gentle songs were inspired by a perfectly correct life, and Burns, "Bobbie Burns" as we prefer to call him, ploughing, sinning, repenting, writing his poems at odd moments as his principal pleasure in life—these are about as widely different as human beings and poets can be, but their histories should teach us that life is broad and varied, and there is just as much of interest in one phase as another. We may dislike the haughty coldness of Tennyson, yet it gave us the pleasing music and figurative beauty of his verse; and we may find distasteful the placid shallowness of Longfellow, yet it gave us the sweet, tuneful melodies which have become household words in so many thousand homes; and we may regret the passionate and unfortunate love affairs of Burns, yet they gave us the most beautiful, true, and tender love songs human pen ever wrote. The same passions that in Burns went to extremes are to be found in the breasts of half the world, and are the source of more than half the joy there is in life. Even the excesses of his passions did not kill out the sweet, the tender, and the beautiful; if he did wrong, he repented, and in the best of his poems

we have only that which all must admire. The world has agreed to forgive him and to love him. He has always been the special pride of the Scotchman; but no other English poet has been so universally adopted in all parts of the world.

BORN IN A CLAY HUT.

Robert Burns was born in a cottage built of clay by his father, on a small farm two miles south of Ayr, January 25, 1759. A week after his birth a terrible windstorm blew in the gable, and mother and child had to be carried at midnight to the house of a neighbor.

Burns's father, who spelt his name "Burnes," was a fairly well educated and rather superior farmer, and his mother "had a fine complexion, bright dark eyes, cheerful spirits, and a memory stored with song and ballad—a love for which Robert drew in with her milk." Both were persons of firm integrity and strict piety. In *The Cotter's Saturday Night* the poet described his own home, his father, the "toil-worn Cotter," collecting his "spades, his mattocks, and his hoes, hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend." The life was one of the hardest, most grinding toil, and "weary" indeed he often was as "o'er the moor his course he hameward bends." Yet in all the hardship there was a happiness none could take away.

His wee bit ingle, blinking bonilie,

His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,

Does all his weary carking care beguile,
An' make him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

A LIFE OF GRINDING TOIL.

Robert was the eldest of seven children. When he was seven (in 1766) his father moved to another farm not far away, called Mount Oliphant. But it was a very poor farm, and for eleven years the family had a hard struggle. The two eldest boys, Robert and Gilbert, had to do the work of men. It was a life of incessant, terrible, weary work. Yet the father did everything he could for the education of his children. When Robert was seven, four neighbors clubbed together to hire a teacher named Murdoch for Robert and Gilbert. Gilbert appeared the brighter of the two, and Robert "wore a grave and thoughtful look." In church music the boys lagged far behind, and Robert's ear is said to have been so dull that he could scarcely distinguish one tune from another. This seems strange when we remember that Burns is one of the greatest song writers the world has ever seen. Murdoch taught him to read good books, and by the time he was eleven, he tells us, he was "a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles." His kind, judicious, and thoughtful father had good books in the house, too, and they read together the *Spectator*, Shakespeare's plays, Pope, Locke on The Human Understanding, Boyle's Lectures, and Allan Ramsay's works. But Robert's favorite volume was a collection of songs, of which he says, "This was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I

owed to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is!" There was in the family, also, a certain old woman named Betty Davidson, who had the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, and the like, which no doubt supplied Robert with the material he used in his *Tam O'Shanter* and *Address to the Deil*. Murdoch also lent the boy a *Life of Hannibal*, and a neighboring blacksmith lent him a *History of Sir William Wallace*. Such was the basis of his learning. Not much, but enough for a Burns.

THE FIRST LOVE SONG.

When Robert was sixteen the family moved to another farm, but not before Burns had found out what love was, and written a poem to his loved one (*Handsome Nell*). "You know," he says, "our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of the harvest. In my fifteenth summer my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scotch idiom. She was a bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. . . . Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her when returning in the evening from our labours, why the

tones of her voice made my heart strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and especially why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her love-inspiring qualities she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who read Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could shear sheep and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholarcraft than myself. Thus with me began love and poetry." This first song ran:

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

"I composed it," says Burns, "in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance."

WORK AND LOVE-MAKING.

After the family moved to Lochlea, Burns went to dancing school "to give his manners a finish," and there was hardly a pretty lass in that parish

of Tarbolton on whom he did not write a poem. The grinding toil of the farm, continued, however, though at first the conditions were somewhat better, and Gilbert and Robert received seven pounds apiece in wages.

In his nineteenth summer he went to Kirkoswald to study mensuration or surveying. The region was infested with smugglers, to whom he was introduced with "scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation." The fact is, Burns was a brilliant, witty talker, and always extremely popular at the gay tavern meetings which offered the chief social life of those times. But the study of mensuration went on till one day in the Kailyard behind the teacher's house he met a young lass, and "the ebullition of that passion ended the school business in Kirkoswald," he himself tells us. But he had been reading the songs of Shenstone and Thomson while at Kirkoswald, and however much love-making interfered with other things, it helped on his song-writing, for the more he loved the more he sang.

"While the love-making was incessant," says his brother Gilbert, "it was governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty, from which he never deviated till he reached his twenty-third year." And Gilbert recalls that in these days "Robert was sure to enliven their toil with a rattling fire of witty remarks on men and things, mingled with the expressions of a genial, glowing heart, and the whole perfectly free from the taint which he afterwards acquired from his contact with the world. Not

even in those volumes which afterwards charmed his country from end to end did Gilbert see his brother in so interesting a light as in these conversations in the bog where they went to cut peat, with only two or three noteless peasants for an audience."

AN UNREQUITED LOVE INSPIRES A GREAT SONG.

He was not quite twenty-three when he fell in love with the daughter of a small farmer, who was a servant in a family on Cessnock Water, about two miles from Lochlea. Ellison Begbie was not a beauty, but she had an unusual liveliness and grace of mind, and Burns would have liked to marry her and settle down in life. She would have none of him, however. His fruitless love for her inspired his first really great love song, the one called "Mary Morison," one verse of which reads,—

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake would gladly die;
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be,
The thought o' Mary Morison.

His father had been giving him a piece of ground each year on which he raised flax, and he thought it would be a good idea to learn flax dressing. Accordingly he went to Irvine to live with a relative of his mother's, but here he met some smuglers and tavern companions, and when they were

welcoming the new year in bacchanalian fashion the house caught fire and burned down. This ended the flax-dressing project.

It was about this time that Burns became a Freemason, taking an enthusiastic interest in the society.

HE LEARNS THE MEANING OF LAWLESS LOVE.

He seems to have had no love affairs at Irvine, but he met a wild sailor lad who had a wonderful fascination for him. "He was," says Burns, "the only man I ever knew who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of lawless love with a levity which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief." Another companion induced him to adopt "more liberal opinions" of life and religion. At the same time all who met him were struck with his air of melancholy and gloomy silence. He wrote to his father, "As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing to meet them." Already he was beginning to feel the heavy hand of that fate which was to crush out his life, and the thought made him desperate and reckless, as similar circumstances did in the case of Poe many years later. Those who have felt this blighting touch and shared in this desperation will

forgive much to the sensitive and gifted poets who were driven by it to indulgences and excesses which seemed the only refuge to a darkened soul.

SCOTCH FARMING.

Toward the end of 1783 the two elder sons realized that something must be done to meet the impending crisis in their financial affairs, and on their own account took another farm at Mossgiel, in the parish of Mauchline, two or three miles from Lochlea. The father's health had long been yielding under the struggle against poverty, and in the following February (1784) he died.

The farm was about 118 acres of cold clay soil, but Robert Burns made a firm resolution to be prudent and industrious. "I read farming books," he says, "I calculated crops, I attended markets, and, in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

The fact is, his widowed mother had to receive into her family and bring up "a child that never should have been born." The church took note of it and publicly punished him for his sin, and he wrote wicked and witty verses about it to his friend and boon companion, John Rankine. This introduced the poet to a new phase of his life. The clergy of the country were divided into two camps,

Auld Lights and New Lights. It was the Auld Light minister who had punished Burns for his sin, and this drove him to take sides with the New Lights, who were more tolerant and easy in their ways. The fact is, however, the elder Burns had had leanings toward the New Lights, and two friends Robert made at this time, Mr. Gavin Hamilton, from whom he held his farm on a sublease, and Mr. Aiken, to whom the Cotter's Saturday Night is dedicated, were in the thick of personal disputes with the Auld Light clergyman and the local church authorities. The lively interest that Burns took in these church quarrels gave birth to his witty satires, the Two Herds, Holy Willie's Prayer, and the Holy Fair. Thus Burns publicly committed himself, challenging not only the conventional and respectable world, but even the supporters of law, order, and public reverence.

In his noted essay on Burns Carlyle says, "With principles assailed by evil example from without, by 'passions raging like demons' from within, he had little need of skeptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he had committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guilt-

ness, and that is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation gathers over him, broken only by the red lightnings of remorse."

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

Yet at the very time he was writing his satires against the church, he composed that most touching and beautiful picture of the simple religion of the Scotch peasant, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, which he repeated one Sunday afternoon to his brother Gilbert as they were out for a walk; and the brother describes himself as electrified, as well he might be. As a matter of fact, since the death of his father Robert had himself led the family worship, and his sister speaks with the greatest admiration of the style of his prayers.

The failure of his crops in these years of 1784 and 1785 seems to have awakened in him the conviction that his destiny was to be a poet, an ambition which he describes in his commonplace book as follows: After speaking with admiration of the works of Ramsey and Ferguson, whom he always refers to as his models, he goes on, "Yet we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes of Ayr, and the healthy mountainous source and winding sweep of Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but, alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native genius and in education. Obscure I am. obscure I must be,

though no young poet nor young soldier's heart ever beat more fondly for fame than mine."

In a period of about six months, from November, 1785, to April, 1786, he wrote most of those descriptive poems which have done so much to make his name famous—Halloween, To a Mouse, The Jolly Beggars, The Cotter's Saturday Night, Address to the Deil, The Auld Farmer's Address to His Auld Mare, The Vision, The Twa Dogs, The Mountain Daisy, and some six or seven epistles to brother bards.

In one of his epistles he says of the joy it was to him to write these poems,

Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amais't my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, at leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough and raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Chambers, one of Burns's biographers, thus describes the garret in which all of these poems were written: "The farmhouse of Mossgiel, which still exists almost unchanged since the days of the poet, is very small, consisting of only two rooms, a but and a ben, as they are called in Scotland. Over these, reached by a trap stair, is a small garret, in which Robert and his brother used to sleep. Thither, when he had returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire, and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields.

His favourite time for composition was at the plough. Long years afterward his sister, Mrs. Begg, used to tell how, when her brother had gone forth again to field-work, she would steal up to the garret and search the drawer of the deal table for the verses which Robert had newly transcribed."

BURNS MEETS HIS FUTURE WIFE.

There can have been very little drinking or carousing during this Mossgiel period, for Gilbert says Robert's private expenditures did not exceed seven pounds a year. His principal pleasures must have been verse-making and love-making. Soon after he came to this farm he had met Jean Armour at a penny wedding, and their acquaintance soon ripened into passion on his part. In the spring of 1786 he learned that she was about to become a mother. The news came to him like a thunder-clap, and he did what he could to repair the wrong by giving her a written acknowledgment of marriage, a document recognized by Scotch law as legalizing their union. But Mr. Armour, who was a respectable mason, was so indignant at the idea of his daughter's relations with a man like Burns that he got hold of the writing and destroyed it. Burns himself felt driven to the verge of insanity by the turn affairs had taken, and his troubles culminated when the Armours let loose the terrors of the law against him and he was obliged to skulk from the house of one friend to another. He felt that it was better for him to leave the country, and accordingly he ar-

ranged with Dr. Douglas to act as bookkeeper on his estate in Jamaica. As he did not have the necessary nine pounds to pay his steerage passage out there, it was suggested to him that he publish a subscription edition of his poems to raise the amount. So the immortal poems were published to raise nine pounds to carry the poet into exile!

Jean Armour's desertion of him, coming on the heels of the failure of his farming, plunged Burns into a despair that he has chronicled in his poem *The Lament*, beginning,

Oh, thou pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!

HIGHLAND MARY.

But in this extremity of his desperation there appeared to comfort him a girl who inspired his tenderest, purest, and most exquisite love songs. It is certainly strange that this pure white flower of affection should have appeared as it were an interlude between the first and second acts of his relations with Jean Armour, who was to become his wife. How Burns made the acquaintance with Mary Campbell, his Highland Mary, we do not know, and indeed very little is known of the whole affair outside his poems. She was maid-servant in the family of his friend, Mr. Hamilton, whither she had come from Argyllshire. On the second Sunday of May, 1786, (the month following the scenes with Jean Armour) they met on the banks of the River Ayr

to spend one day of parting love, and standing on either side of a small brook, they dipped their hands in the stream (according to the old Scottish custom), and holding a Bible between them, vowed eternal fidelity to one another. The Bible which Burns gave her that day has been found. It is in two volumes, and in the first volume in Burns's handwriting is inscribed "And ye shall not swear by My Name falsely, I am the Lord"; in the other, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath." The names of Mary Campbell and Robert Burns which were originally inscribed in the Bible have been almost obliterated. Strange as it may seem, Burns never mentioned the name of Mary Campbell to any member of his family, and the month after their parting, in writing to a friend about "poor, ill-advised Armour," he remarked that "to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her." However, Burns and Mary never met again. She was going home to prepare for her wedding with him, but in October of the same year she came from Argyllshire as far as Greenock, where she was attacked by a fever and died. When Burns received the letter telling of her death he was at Mossgiel. He went to the window to read the letter, and the family noticed that on a sudden his face changed. He went out without speaking, and they never questioned him. But three years afterward he wrote that most beautiful of his poems in English, *To Mary in Heaven*—a testimony to the lasting quality of his

love. Some writers, however, do not take this love of Mary so seriously. Burns ever thought most tenderly and purely of what he couldn't get, and the Highland Mary of his poems may be after all only the idealized vision of his heart, which materialized itself about Mary Campbell chiefly because she died. Poets are ever wont to be more tender with their memories than with their realities.

HIS POEMS ARE PUBLISHED.

Burns went to Kilmarnock in the fall to escape being compelled to support his twin children, and there read the proof of the first edition of his poems. Some six hundred copies were printed, half of which were subscribed for in advance. The book made a sensation, and the other half of the edition was quickly sold. Burns cleared twenty pounds, and because of the success postponed his journey to Jamaica. Dr. Thomas Blacklock wrote a letter full of admiration of the author's ability, and the poems were reviewed in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for October. A second edition was called for, and friends urged Burns to go to Edinburgh to publish it.

The journey was a sort of triumphal progress. Burns rode on a borrowed pony, and was entertained by friends on the way. The first stop was made at the farm of a Mr. Prentice, whose son in a letter describes the occasion: "All the farmers in the parish had read the poet's then published works, and were anxious to see him. They were all asked to meet him at a late dinner, and the signal of his arrival was to be a white sheet attached to

a pitchfork, and put on the top of a cornstack in the barnyard. The parish is a beautiful amphitheatre, with the Clyde winding through it. . . . My father's stack, lying in the centre, was seen from every house in the parish. At length Burns arrived, mounted on a borrowed pownie. Instantly was the white flag hoisted, and as instantly were seen the farmers issuing from their houses, and converging to the point of meeting. A glorious evening, or rather night, which borrowed something from the morning, followed, and the conversation of the poet confirmed and increased the admiration created by his writings." And this is but a sample of the way in which he was received wherever he went.

A HERO IN EDINBURGH.

On reaching Edinburgh Burns sought out a Mauchline friend, named John Richmond, and during the whole of that gay winter shared this lad's garret, for which they paid three shillings a week. Of course Burns came with no social introductions, but he soon found friends. A Mr. Dalrymple, whom he had met in Ayrshire, introduced him to Lord Glencairn, who became one of Burns' most faithful friends, and on December 9th Henry Mackenzie, "The Man of Feeling," appeared with an article in the *Lounger*, which hailed Burns as an original poet, bearing the stamp of true genius, and he urged his countrymen to repair the wrongs which suffering and neglect had inflicted on the great national poet who had arisen among them. Within a month Burns was a welcome guest at the table of the leading lit-

erary and social lights of Edinburgh, caressed by duchesses, smiled on by lords, and sought by literary men, judges, and professors. Sir Walter Scott says, "I was a lad of fifteen when Burns came to Edinburgh, but had sense enough to be interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him. I saw him one day with several gentlemen of literary reputation, among them I remember the celebrated Dugald Stewart. . . . His person was robust, his manners rustic, not clownish. . . . His countenance was more massive than it looks in any of his portraits. There was a strong expression of shrewdness in his lineaments, the eye alone indicating the poetic character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, and literally glowed when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in any human head. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the least intrusive forwardness. I thought his acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and having twenty times the ability of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson he talked of them with too much humility as his models. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling."

Burns was known as "the Ploughman Poet," and was treated as a sort of prodigy. He himself recognized the hollowness of it all, and declared he had a living at the plough tail, and indeed never seems to have thought of becoming a regular literary worker in Edinburgh.

Creech, then the leading publisher of Edinburgh,

brought out the second edition of his poems, under the patronage of a fashionable association, known as the Caledonian Hunt, and one nobleman subscribed for as many as forty-two copies. In all Burns realized nearly five hundred pounds (twenty-five hundred dollars), though it was more than a year before he got a settlement.

While he was dining with duchesses, he was often spending his nights with a less refined class at taverns. At that time tavern life was in the ascendant in Scotland, and gathered what we moderns call the "true Bohemians." Undoubtedly Burns liked Bohemia better than he did fashionable society, and in this many today will sympathize with him. His desire seems to have been to get a farm and settle down, and he was soon making inquiries in this direction.

THE RETURN TO MOSSGIEL.

The following spring he left Edinburgh, and after a pleasure trip to various Scottish scenes he had long been familiar with in song and ballad and wished to see, he returned to Mossgiel. The Armour family, who the year before had threatened him with the law, was now all smiles. "If anything had been wanting to disgust me completely with the Armour family, their mean, servile compliance would have done it." A proud spirit that had rankled under the surface in Edinburgh, seems to have been not less bitter in Ayrshire, and he wrote to a friend, "I never, my friends, thought mankind very capable of anything generous, but the stateliness of the patri-

cians in Edinburgh, and the civility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket copy of Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me in order to study the sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, Satan." He met Jean Armour accidentally, and their affectionate intimacy was renewed, as if no break between them had ever occurred. At the end of June he made another journey, this time to the Highlands. In a letter describing some "high jinks" in the north, he says, "I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon."

He returned to Edinburgh to see his publisher about getting a settlement, after which he set out on another pleasure trip to the north, among other places visiting Bannockburn.

NOBLE FRIENDS GROW COLD.

The following winter was spent in Edinburgh, apparently in an effort to get a long-delayed settlement with Creech. The second winter in Edinburgh was very different from the first. The noble lords who had been so eager to welcome, now barely nodded as they passed the poet on the street, and the dinner invitations from duchesses

and legal lights did not arrive. The Ploughman Poet had been a fad, and the fad had run its day. Burns did not care, apparently, but plunged into his last historic love passion. He had made the acquaintance of two young ladies in Edinburgh of whom he was fond, Miss Chalmers and Miss Hamilton, and wrote poems to both, but while they welcomed his friendship, they did not encourage any love-making, and both were married not long after. He was introduced, however, to a Mrs. M'Lehose, who had been deserted by her husband and left to provide for her children as best she could. Before Burns was able to call upon her he was upset by a drunken coachman, so that he was confined to his room for several weeks with an injured knee. He wrote the lady a note of apology, she responded with expressions of warm sympathy and friendship, and Burns was only too ready to plunge into a most impassioned correspondence. We are told that this lady was "of a somewhat voluptuous style of beauty, of lively and easy manners, of a poetical fabric of mind, with some wit and not too high a degree of refinement or delicacy, exactly the kind of woman to fascinate Burns." On December 30th he wrote, "Almighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom, and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow, who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating stiletto of the Sicilian bandit, or the poison arrow of the savage African." They called each other Clarinda and Sylvander, and their letters have been preserved and published. The

lady seems to have thought seriously of a union with Burns when Mr. M'Lehose had been disposed of, but the bombastic style in which Burns wrote seems incompatible with anything more on his part than a desire to indulge his passion. The excitement of the affair was like an intoxicant to him, and gave him the relief from his troubles that drink did. Again and again he vowed eternal love and fidelity, but a few weeks later when he learned that Jean Armour was once more in trouble and had been turned out of doors by her father, he returned to Mossgiel and married her. The correspondence with Clarinda languished and very soon came to an end.

HE BECOMES AN EXCISE MAN.

Of the five hundred pounds Burns received from Creech, he had doubtless spent one hundred in Edinburgh, nearly two hundred more he gave to his brother who was in straits (presumably as his provision for their mother), and with the other two hundred he made a home for himself and his Jean on a farm he had rented at Ellisland. The farm was a very beautiful spot, but Burns had made "a poet's, not a farmer's, choice," for the soil was hard and poor. The only favor he got from his Edinburgh friends was having his name put on the Excise list.

He had to build a house on the new farm and furnish it before he could bring his wife and children there, and he very soon found it advisable to take his excise appointment, which added

fifty pounds a year 'to his income. At first he seems to have been very happy, as we may judge from his song, "I hae a wife o' my ain." Jean was a patient, devoted, faithful wife to him, and in the nearly forty years she lived after his death cherished and revered his memory to the last. He had friends, too, in whom he took pleasure, such as Mrs. Dunlop, who on seeing a copy of his first edition had sent a messenger to Mossgiel with an order for six more, so inaugurating an acquaintance which Burns cherished to the end, and Mrs. Riddell, who, with her husband, continued his friend and agreeable companion except for one temporary break.

During these years his one comfort and pleasure was writing songs. In Edinburgh he had made the acquaintance of James Johnson, who was making a collection of Scottish songs and ballads, called the *Musical Museum*, and to this Burns contributed in all one hundred and eighty-four songs, some original, many altered or with a stanza or two added, others merely collected.

In a couple of years he had sunk all his money in the farm at Ellisland, and was compelled to sell up his crops and depend henceforth on his salary as exciseman. This was increased to seventy pounds, and he moved to Dumfries, a third-rate Scottish town, where in miserable surroundings he spent the last four years of his life cut off from the beauties and solace of the picturesque country of which he was so fond. His health began to fail, hope for the future had been taken from him, and

he spent these last years in a tragical struggle for food for himself and his family. Just before he died he sent passionate appeals to two of his friends for small sums to keep him out of jail. No doubt when he could he drowned his woes in liquor, as in other years he had solaced himself with too passionate love-making. But our pity must overcome our condemnation.

THE SOLACE OF SONG WRITING.

Soon after he went to Dumfries Mr. George Thomson wrote him a letter about a new collection of Scottish melodies, airs, and words which a band of musical amateurs at Edinburgh was contemplating. It was to be a more carefully selected gathering than that of the *Museum*, edited with more rigid care, and to be supplied with symphonies and accompaniments from the first musicians of Europe. In answer Burns wrote, "As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyment in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking, with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. As to remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall be absolutely the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm in which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of soul." Thomson was not at all rich, and never got much out of his collection beyond a return of the large sums he had to pay out. Once he sent Burns

a small sum, but the poet replied, "I assure you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear, by that honour which crowns the upright statue of *Robert Burns's Integrity*, on the least motion of it I will indignantly spurn the by-pact transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you." The case with Johnson had been much the same. But just before his death Burns appealed to Thomson for five pounds and got it by return of post. Practically all the writings of this period were songs, except *Tam o' Shanter*, which was dashed off in a single summer's day.

DEATH.

In the early summer of 1796 Mrs. Burns was about to be confined with a child actually born after its father's death, and the sister of a neighbor, Miss Jessie Lewars, cared for the poet in his last days. To her he wrote two songs, one among the most beautiful of his composition. He died July 21, 1796, and as he was being buried with all the honor the neighborhood was capable of mustering his wife gave birth to a posthumous son, who, however, did not live long. His grave was unmarked for some years, when his wife put up a simple stone. Twenty-one years later a somewhat pretentious mausoleum was erected by public subscription, and stands to this day, visited each

year by many pilgrims to the grave of Robert Burns.

No more truthful inscription could have been chiselled on his tomb than his own "Bard's Epitaph," written ten years before:

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow
 And softer flame;
But thoughtless folly laid him low
 And stained his name.

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flight beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
 In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

As a poet he "interpreted the lives, thoughts, feelings, manners of the Scottish peasantry to whom he belonged. . . . He not only sympathized with the wants, the trials, the joys and sorrows of their obscure lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and interpreted them to others, and this, too, in their own language, made musical and glorified by genius. . . . In looking up to him the Scottish people have seen an impersonation of themselves on a large scale—of themselves, both in their virtues and in their vices." And these virtues and vices have turned out to be in good part the vir-

tues and vices of all mankind. He is so great because of his simple sincerity and truth, and as Wordsworth sang, teaches us—

How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

The preface to the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems begins, "The following trifles are not the production of the poet who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegance and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, in their original language, *a fountain shut up and a book sealed*. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites of beginning poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him. in his and their native language."

NOTE.—The spelling and styles of the original editions (not always consistent) have been followed so far as possible in this edition of Burns.

LOVE SONGS

MY NANIE, O.

Written when Burns was seventeen or eighteen, and according to his brother Gilbert addressed to Agnes Fleming, the daughter of a farmer in Tarbolton parish, after the Burnses moved to Lochlea.

Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa' to Nanie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O:
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young:
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O;
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome aye to Nanie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a', my Nanie, O.

Our auld Guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will send me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

ON CESSNOCK BANKS.

Addressed (1781) to Ellison Begbie, the girl who refused to listen to Burns's love-making.

On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells;
Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lassies a' she far excels,
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's sweeter than the morning dawn
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash
That grows the cowslips braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her looks are like the vernal May,
When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene,
While birds rejoice on every spray;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When gleaming sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her teeth are like the nightly snow
When pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murmuring streamlets flow;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her lips are like yon cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen;
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep:
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phœbus sinks beneath the seas;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,
An' chiefly in her rogueish een.

MARY MORISON.

This song, written probably two years later, when Burns was twenty-five, is thought also to have been addressed to Ellison Begbie, and is his first song of really surpassing merit.

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor;
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard or saw :
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,
 I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
 'Ye are na Mary Morison.'

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his,
 Whase only faut is loving thee?
 If love for love thou wilt nae gie,
 At least be pity to me shown!
 A thought ungentle canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

NOW WESTLIN WINDS.

Commemorating the love affair with Margaret Thomson, which ended the study of mensuration at Kirkoswald several years before.

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
 Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
 The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
 Amang the blooming heather :
 Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
 Delights the weary farmer;
 And the moon shines bright, when I rove at
 night
 To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path o' man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannic man's dominion!
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

But, Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue, the fields in view
All fading-green and yellow:
Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ilka happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
While the silent moon shines clearly;
I'll clasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I lo'e thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not Autumn to the farmer,

So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 't were na for the lasses, O.

CHORUS.

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.
The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O,
An' war'ly cares an' war'ly men
May a' gae tapsalteerie, Oh!

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

THE LAMENT

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S
AMOUR.

Written on hearing of the first trouble of Jean Armour. Though hardly a song, it is an item in Burns's love history.

*Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet AFFECTION prove the spring of woe!*
HOME.

O thou pale Orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-markèd, distant hill;
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame;

The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
 The oft attested Pow'rs above;
 The promis'd father's tender name:
 These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
 How have the raptur'd moments flown!
 How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
 For her dear sake, and hers alone!
 And must I think it! is she gone,
 My secret heart's exulting boast?
 And does she heedless hear my groan?
 And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
 So lost to honour, lost to truth,
 As from the fondest lover part,
 The plighted husband of her youth!
 Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
 Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
 Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
 Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wingèd hours that o'er us past,
 Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
 Your dear remembrance in my breast,
 My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
 That breast, how dreary now, and void,
 For her too scanty once of room!
 Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
 And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
 Awakes me up to toil and woe:

1 see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, Fancy, chief,
Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

O! thou bright Queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high.
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.

This is the first of the poems to Mary Campbell, or "Highland Mary," composed probably when he first began to think of her after the Armours had thrown him off, in the spring of 1786.

Flow gently, Sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering fair!

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills!
There daily I wander, as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green vallies below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear
wave!

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE.

This song was apparently written soon after the last, when Burns was planning to go to Jamaica.

Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my Muse's care;
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

CHORUS.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rushy, O,
I set me down wi' right good will
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

Within the glen, &c.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

Within the glen, &c.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Fareweel the glen sae bushy, O!
Fareweel the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O!

A PRAYER FOR MARY.

This was found among his papers after his death.

Powers celestial! whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care:
Let her form so fair and faultless—
Fair and faultless as your own—
Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down!

Make the gales you waft around her
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Soothe her bosom into rest:
Guardian angels! O protect her,
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me.
Make her bosom still my home!

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

Burns told Mr. Thomson in 1792, "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl."

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic roar?

O, sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true,
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand!
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand!

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!

THO' CRUEL FATE

These lines, found in Burns' commonplace book, refer to Jean Armour, and were doubtless written at this period, when he was thinking more of Jean than of Mary.

Tho' cruel fate should bid us part
Far as the pole and line,
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.
Tho' mountains rise, and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between,
Yet dearer than my deathless soul
I still would love my Jean.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF

OF A COPY OF THE FIRST EDITION [OF HIS POEMS]
PRESENTED TO AN OLD SWEATHEART,
THEN MARRIED.

Dr. Currie says this was Mrs. Neilson, the Peggie Thomson of Kirkoswald.

Once fondly lov'd, and still remember'd dear,
Sweet early object of my youthful vows,
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere;
Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him, he asks no more,
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

BONIE DOON

This is the first and best version of a song written in January, 1787, to Peggy K., a lively young lady he had met at the house of a friend in Mauchline a year or two before.

Ye flowery banks of bonie Doon
How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days,
When my fause luvè was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang of its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae off its thorny tree;
And my fause luvè staw the rose
But left the thorn wi' me.

WHERE, BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S
STORMS.

Addressed to Margaret Chalmers, one of the young ladies he met early in his second winter in Edinburgh, 1787.

Where, braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochils rise,
Far in their shade my Peggys' charms
First blest my wondering eyes:
As one who by some savage stream
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd doubly, marks it beam
With art's most polish'd blaze.
Blest be the wild, sequester'd glade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their pow'r!
The tyrant Death with grim control
May seize my fleeting breath,
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

MY PEGGY'S FACE.

A second song to the same Miss Chalmers.

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,

Her native grace so void of art;
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway,
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look that rage disarms,
These are all immortal charms.

BANKS OF DEVON.

This song was addressed to Charlotte Hamilton, cousin of Margaret Chalmers. Which Burns liked the better is a matter of dispute, but Miss Chalmers told Thomas Campbell, the poet, that Burns made a proposal of marriage to her.

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers bloom-
ing fair!

But the boniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew!
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

O, spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

I LOVE MY JEAN.

Burns was thirty when, in 1788, he decided to accept Jean Armour as his wife and take her with him to the farm at Ellisland. This song was written at that time, and is one of his sweetest.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air;
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

anet,
ed on

I HAE A WIFE O' MY AIN.

When he had installed Jean in the new home he wrote the following, in imitation of an old ballad.

I hae a wife o' my ain,
 I'll partake wi' naebody:
 I'll take cuckold frae nane,
 I'll gie cuckold to naebody.

I hae a penny to spend,
 There—thanks to naebody!
 I hae naething to lend,
 I'll borrow frae naebody.

I am naebody's lord,
 I'll be slave to naebody.
 I hae a guid braid sword,
 I'll tak dunts frae naebody.

I'll be merry and free,
 I'll be sad for naebody.
 Naebody cares for me,
 I care for naebody.

MY BONIE MARY.

Burns did not claim this song as his own, but he afterward acknowledged that all but the first four lines were his own, and even these first lines were considerably changed.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 An' fill it in a silver tassie;
 That I may drink before I go,
 A service to my bonie lassie.

And
The

The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;

But it's no the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar,
It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

Three years after the death of Mary Campbell, one day at the end of the harvest, Burns was reminded of her. Mrs. Burns told Lockhart that after working all day in the harvest, "as the twilight deepened, he appeared to grow 'very sad about something,' and at length wandered out in the barnyard, to which his wife, in her anxiety, followed him, entreating him in vain to observe that frost had set in, and to return to the fireside. On being again and again requested to do so, he promised compliance, but still remained where he was, striding up and down slowly, and contemplating the sky, which was singularly clear and starry. At last Mrs. Burns found him stretched on a mass of straw, with his eyes fixed on a beautiful planet, "that shone like another moon," and prevailed on

him to come in. He immediately, on entering the house, called for his desk, and wrote exactly as they now stand, with all the ease of one copying from memory, these sublime and pathetic verses."

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day,
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity cannot efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace—
Ah! little thought we 't was our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
'Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser-care.
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

Burns was visiting a Mr. Jeffrey, a clergyman of Lochlaben, and his blue-eyed daughter did the honours of the table. Next morning he presented this song.

I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa lovely een o' bonie blue.
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright,
Her lips like roses wat wi' dew,
Her heaving bosom lily-white;—
It was her een sae bonie blue.

She talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wyl'd,
She charm'd my soul I wist na how;
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonie blue.
But spare to speak, and spare to speed;
She'll aiblins listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
To her twa een sae bonie blue.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.

Contributed to Johnson's Museum, and apparently not connected with his personal history.

O wilt thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
O wilt thou go' wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a car,
Or walk by my side, O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
I care na thy daddie, his lands and his money,
I care na thy kin, sae high and sae lordly:
But say thou wilt hae me for better for waur,
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

The best song Burns wrote in 1790, his **thirty** first year.

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is bald, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.
John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

The first stanza was not written by Burns. He found it, the one beautiful spot in an old string of doggerel, and made it the basis of his own beautiful song.

CHORUS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow,
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below,
Farewell to the forests and wild hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

THE BONIE WEE THING.

Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, was thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,

Lest my jewel I should tine.
Wishfully I look and languish
In that bonie face of thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonie wee, &c.

FAREWELL TO NANCY.

Burns wrote several songs to Clarinda, the Mrs. M'Lehose he was so passionately devoted to for a few weeks in his second winter in Edinburgh, but this is the only one that was really of the first water. This lady was about to go to Jamaica to find her husband, and relented toward Burns enough to admit him to a visit, December 6th, 1795, four years after her first meeting with him. This beautiful song doubtless records the passionate feelings incident to that meeting.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blaine my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

This was addressed to Clarinda the following summer, during her absence in the West Indies.

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weat o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—my Nannie's awa.

Thou laverock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn.
And thou, mellow mavis, that hails the night-fa',
Gie over for pity—my Nannie's awa.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay; ·
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa.

BONIE LESLEY.

Mr. Bailie, with his two daughters, passed through Dumfries and Burns accompanied them on their way for fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. On his return he wrote this song, parodying an old ballad, "My Bonnie Lizzie Baillie."

O saw ye bonie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And ne'er made sic anither!

Thou art a queen, Fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, Fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonie face,
And say, 'I canna wrang thee.'

The Powers aboon will tent thee;
 Misfortune sha'na steer thee;
 Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
 That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, Fair Lesley,
 Return to Caledonie!
 That we may brag, we hae a lass
 There's nane again sae bonie.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

Written to fit the air "My wife's a wanton wee thing."

I never saw a fairer,
 I never lo'ed a dearer,
 And neist my heart I'll wear her,
 For fear my jewel tine.

CHORUS.

She is a winsome wee thing,
 She is a handsome wee thing,
 She is a lo'esome wee thing,
 This sweet wee wife o' mine!

The world's wrack, we share o't;
 The warstle and the care o't,
 Wi' her I'll blythely bear it,
 And think my lot divine.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Written in 1792, and Burns in a letter to Mr. Thomson says, "The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days"—his love for Mary Campbell.

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

LOVE SONGS

67

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for ay the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

DUNCAN GRAY.

Burns got the suggestion for this delicious ballad from a rude song in Johnson's Museum, the name only being retained.

Duncan Gray came here to woo
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!)
On blythe Yule-Night when we were fou
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!)
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't an blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Time and chance are but a tide
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!) :
 Slighted love is sair to bide
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 'Shall I like a fool,' quoth he,
 'For a haughty hizzie die?
 She may gae to—France for me!
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Ho., it comes, let doctors tell
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!) :
 Meg grew sick, as he grew hale
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
 Something in her bosom wrings,
 For relief a sigh she brings,
 And O! her een they spak sic things!—
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Duncan was a lad o' grace
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!)
 Maggie's was a piteous case
 (Ha, ha, the wooing o't!) :
 Duncan could na be her death,
 Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
 Now they're crouse and canty baith—
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

GALLA WATER.

Burns first devoted himself to improving a school in the Museum about the lasses of Galla Water, and finally wrote this beautiful set of verses.

There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
 That wander thro' the blooming heather;

But Yarrow braes nor Ettrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonie lad o' Galla Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tocher;
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

It ne'er wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warl's treasure!

O, WHISTLE AN' I'LL COME TO YE, MY LAD.

In August, 1793, Burns wrote to Thomson, "Is Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,' one of our airs? I admire it much, and yesterday I set the following verse to it."

CHORUS.

O, whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad!
O, whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad!
Tho' father an' mother an' a' should gae mad,
O, whistle an' I'll come to ye, my lad!

But warily tent when ye come to court me,
And come nae unless the back-yett be a-jee;

Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin to me,
And come as ye were na comin to me!

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin to me,
Yet look as ye were na lookin to me!

Ay vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court na anither though joken ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me!

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

The first half-stanza is from an older song, which Burns improved upon.

The lovely lass of Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en to morn she cries 'Alas!'
And ay the saut tear blin's her e'e:—

'Drumossie moor, Drumossie day—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three.

Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin green to see,
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e.

Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
 A bluidy man I trow thou be,
 For monie a heart thou hast made sair
 That ne'er did wrang to thine o. thee!

A RED, RED ROSE.

Another improvement on an old song, 1794.

O, my luvie is like a red, red rose,
 That's newly sprung in June.

O, my luvie is like the melodie,
 That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
 So deep in luvie am I,

And I will luvie thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
 And I will luvie thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvie,
 And fare thee weel a while!

And I will come again, my luvie,
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
 And a' is young and sweet like thee,
 O, wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
 And say thou'lt be my dearie. O?

CHORUS.

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
 Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
 Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks—
 Will thou be my dearie, O?

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
 The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
 The wanton lambs at early morn
 Shall welcome thee, my dearie, O.

And when the welcome simmer shower
 Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
 We'll to the breathing woodbine-bower
 At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

When Cynthia lights wi' silver ray
 The weary shearer's hameward way,
 Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
 And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

And when the howling wintry blast
 Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
 Enclaspèd to my faithful breast,
 I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

Written in February, 1796, shortly before Burns died. ♀

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
 The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:
 O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
 O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

CHORUS.

Then ney, for a lass wi' a tocher, then hey, for a
 lass wi' a tocher,
 Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher; the nice yellow
 guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower in the morning that blows,
 And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
 But the rapturous charm o' the bonie green knowes,
 Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonie white yowes.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
 The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
 But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
 The langer ye hae them—the mair they're carest.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Written for Miss Jessie Lewars, who attended Burns in his last illness. He asked her to sit down at the piano and play over any air that pleased her, and he would write a song to it. She played "The robin came to the wren's nest," and after he got it in his head Burns wrote this poem to that air.

O, wert thou in the cauld blast,
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidie to the angry airt,
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
 Or did misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
 Thy bield should be my bosom,
 To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Of earth and air, of earth and air,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The only jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

COMING THROUGH THE RYE.

Coming through the rye, poor body;
Coming through the rye,
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.
Jenny's a' wat, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

Gin a body meet a body—
Coming through the rye;
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need the world ken?
Jenny's a' wat, poor body;
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

OTHER SONGS

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

James M'Pherson was a noted freebooter. While he lay in prison under sentence of death he composed a song and an appropriate air. Burns wrote this song to the same air, as an improvement, in 1788.

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
McPherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

CHORUS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he,
He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round
Below the gallows-tree.

O, what is death but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword,
And there's no a man in all Scotlând
But I'll brave him at a word.

I've lived a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:

It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avengèd be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dare not die!

AULD LANG SYNE.

This is another improvement written by Burns in 1788. He pretended the poem was not his, sending it to George Thomson with an expression of self-congratulation on having been so fortunate as to recover it from an old man's singing. Certainly the second and third verses are his own.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne.

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine,
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne!

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne!

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.

This was written in 1789 to celebrate a joyous meeting between Allan Masterton, William Nicol, and Burns, on a visit Burns was paying to Nicol.

O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see.
Three blyther hearts that lee-lang night
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

CHORUS.

We are na fou, we're na that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

Here are we met three merry boys,
 Three merry boys I trow are we;
 And monie a night we've merry been,
 And monie mae we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
 That's blinkin in the lift sae hie:
 She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
 But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
 A cuckold, coward loun is he!
 Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
 He is the King amang us three!

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' TH' EXCISEMAN.

This song was written in 1792, when Burns and some companions were watching a suspicious vessel in Solway Firth and were impatiently waiting for the return of Lewars, his brother exciseman.

The Deil cam fiddlin thro' the town,
 And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman,
 And ilka wite cries:—"Auld Mahoun,
 I wish you luck o' the prize, man!

CHORUS.

The Deil's awa, the Deil's awa,
 The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman!
 He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
 He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

"We'll mak our maut, and we'll brew our drink,
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
And monie braw thanks to the meikle black
Deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man,
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
Was *The Diel's Awa wi' th' Exciseman*.

BANNOCKBURN.

There was a tradition that the air, "Hey, tuttie taitie" was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn, and, fired by the progress of the French revolution in 1793, Burns fitted the following words on liberty and independence to that tune. Thomson did not like the tune and Burns adapted the song to the air of Lewie Gordon. Scots cherish this as one of their greatest patriotic songs, but Wordsworth thought any clever man of talent might have written it.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace 'bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?—
Let him turn, and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE.

Nov. 19, 1794.

Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp as they're creepin' alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a soger, and life is a faught
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare
touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a';
When at the blythe end of our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way,
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jad gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is—'Welcome, and welcome again!'

THE MAN'S THE GOWD FOR A' THAT.

Burns wrote to Thomson (January, 1795) that Aiken had said the exclusive themes for song-writing were love and wine, but this is at least "two or three pretty good prose thoughts converted into rhyme."

Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by—
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toil's obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey, an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
A man's a man, for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,

BURNS

The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd 'a lord,'
What struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word.
He's but a cuif for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
But an honest man's aboon his might—
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

LONGER POEMS

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

Written in 1785 as a satire on the Auld Light minister with whom Burns's friend, Gavin Hamilton, had been having a controversy.

O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin an' a shinin light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,

To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I hear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin there and dancin here,
Wi' great an' sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free 'frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
An' sometimes too, wi' wardly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

O Lord! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
Oh! may it ne'er be a livin' plague
To my dishonour,
An' I'll ne'er lift a flawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides I farther maun allow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I trow;
But Lord, that Friday I was fou,
 When I came near her,
Or else thou kens thy servant true
 Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
 'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
 Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But God confound their stubborn face,
 And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
 An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin arts,
 Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
 He steals awa'.

An' whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,

- As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin at us;
• Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry an' pray'r,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare,
Upo' their heads;
Lord, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My very heart and soul are quakin,
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
An' p—d wi' dread,
While he, wi' hinging lips an' snakin,
Held up his head.

- Lord, in the day of vengeance try him;
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r:
But, for thy people's sake, destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
An' a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen.

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH,
NOVEMBER, 1785.

When Burns first thought of publishing in 1785, he probably composed this and some of the following poems as pure literary efforts. This and the poem "To a Daisy" are considered Burns's two best pastoral efforts.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!

An' naething, now, to big a new an,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coultter past,
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

Written to express a favorite sentiment of the author.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wandered forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man, whose agèd step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
Began the rev'rend Sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The Miseries of Man.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;
I've seen yon weary winter sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
That Man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force give nature's law.
That Man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right,
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show Man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh! what crowds in ev'ry land
Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That Man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressèd, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!

Welcome the hour my agèd limbs
 Are laid with thee at rest!
 The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
 From pomp and pleasure torn;
 But, Oh! a blest relief to those
 That weary-laden mourn!

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR.

This, one of the most popular of Burns's compositions, describes his own father and the home of his childhood.

*Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the Poor.*
 GRAY.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
 No mercenary bard his homage pays:
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end;
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
 To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
 Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I
 ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
 The short'ning winter day is near a close;

The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hame-
ward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
A service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncoss that he sees or hears;

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaisht as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord
aright!

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door.
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worth-
less rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,

But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the
lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
'If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning
gale.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction
wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:
The soupe their only Hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell.

An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far t' e noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by
Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal
sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine pre-
side.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God':
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, Oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile;
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd
Isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
 Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
 (The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)

O never, never, Scotia's realm desert,
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

An outgrowth of Burns's irritation at the Auld
 Light clergy.

*O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
 That led th' embattled Seraphim to war—*
 MILTON.

O thou! whatever title suit thee,
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
 Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
 Clos'd under hatches,
 Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
 To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
 An' let poor damned bodies be;
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 ❀ Ev'n to a deil,
 To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowan heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-wing'd Tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld, ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentín light
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sugk.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick, quaick,
 Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' withered hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
 Owre howkit dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
 By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gaen
 As yell's the Bill.

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young Guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
 By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
 Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then, Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
 By your direction,
An' nighted Trav'lers are allur'd
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing Spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
 Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When Masons' mystic word an' grip,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
 Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
 In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
An' played on man a cursed brogue,
 (Black be you fa!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
 'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz,
 'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uzz
 Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal,'
While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl,
 Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
 To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
 An' cheat you yet!

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake!

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW YEAR MORN-
ING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD
MARE, MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO
HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A guid New Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gane like ony staggie
Out owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek an' glaizie,
A bonie grey:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out owre a stank,
Like onie bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;

Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride;
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young and skeigh,
An' stable meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skriegh
An' take the road!
Town's-bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:

At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gart them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and riskit,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd mv Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The seyest brae thou wad hae face't it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a':
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;

Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
 To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
 Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,
ON TURNING ONE WITH THE PLOUGH, IN
APRIL, 1786. .

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
 Thy slender stem.
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie Lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
 Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield,

But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean fuckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And overwhelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,

Tili wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

THE TWA DOGS.—A TALE.

Written after Burns had decided to publish his first edition. It gives an admirable picture of the converse of the rich and the poor.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for Cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But tho' he was o' high degree,

The fient a pride—nae pride had he;
 But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
 Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messin.
 At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
 Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
 But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
 An' stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
 A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
 Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
 An' in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
 After some dog in Highland sang,
 Was made lang syne,—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
 As ever lap a sheugh or dike.
 His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
 Ay gat him friends in ilka place;
 His breast was white, his touzie back
 Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
 His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
 Hung owre his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
 An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
 Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit;
 Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;
 Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
 An' worry'd ither in diversion;
 Until wi' daffin weary grown,
 Upon a knowe they sat them down,
 An' there began a lang digression
 About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
 What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
 An' when the gentry's life I saw,
 What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
 His coals, his kain, an' a' his stents:
 He rises when he likes himsel;
 His flunkies answer at the bell;
 He ca's his coach; he ca's his horse;
 He draws a bonie, silken purse
 As lang's my tail, whare thro' the steeks,
 The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en, it's nought but toiling,
 At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
 An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
 Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan,
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, and such like trashtrie,
 That's little short o' downright wastrie.
 Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
 Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
 Better than ony tenant man
 His Honour has in a' the lan:
 An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
 I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh:
 A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
 Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,

LONGER POEMS

Baring a quarry, and siclike,
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But, how it comes, I never kend yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespeckit!
Lord, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle,
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:
He'll stamp and threaten, curse an' swear.
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches.

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's ane wad think:
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accusom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives:
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs;
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;

The luntin pipe, an' sneechin mill,
Are haunded round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young anes ranting thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barket wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root an' branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle Master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a parliamentin,
For Britain's guid his saul indentin—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
An' saying *aye* or *no's* they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton* an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he taks the rout,
To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowt;

Or down Italian vista startles,
Whore-hunting amang groves o' myrtles;
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction!

LUATH.

Hech, man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate?
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last?

O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themsels wi' contra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breaking o' their timmer,
Or speaking lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tel me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life a life o' pleasure?
Nae could nor hunger e'er can steer them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes;
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acre's till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy:
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party-matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
Ae night, they're mad wi' drink an' whoring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,

They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
 Whyles, owre the wee bit cup and platie,
 They sip the scandal potion pretty;
 Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
 Pore ower the devil's pictur'd beuks;
 Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
 An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.
 There's some exceptions, man an' woman;
 But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
 An' darker gloamin brought the night:
 The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone,
 The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;
 When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,
 Rejoic'd they were na *men* but *dogs*;
 An' each took aff his several way,
 Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

*My son, these maxims make a rule,
 And lump them aye thegither;
 The RIGID RIGHTEOUS is a fool,
 The RIGID WISE anither:
 The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
 May hae some pyles o' caff in;
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' daffin.*

SOLOMON.—Eccles. vii. 16.

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your Neebour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heapet happier's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable Core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass dounce Wisdom's door,
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ;
Discount what scant occasion gave
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What raging must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your taik,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;

But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco leeway.

See Social life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreadful hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister Woman;
Tho' they may gang a kenning wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *Why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord its various tone,
Each spring its various bias:

Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's *resisted*.

TAM O' SHANTER.

Considered by Scott one of the best tales ever written. It was written one summer's day in 1790, and is the only longer poem of the poet's later years.

A TALE.

Of Brownie's and of Bogie's full is this Buke.

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are bearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
And getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses.)

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,

As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Door•
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!
But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;

The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;—
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in.
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last,
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,

Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil!—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;

And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devlish cantraip slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa spang-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cuttet frae the rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;

The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Ringwooddie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore;
For monie a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear),
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nanie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),

Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;

Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;

To sing how Nannie lap and flang,

(A souple jade she was, and strang),

And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,

And thought his very een enrich'd;

Even Satan glower'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,

And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:

Till first ae caper, syne anither,

Tam tint his reason a' thegither,

And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"

And in an instant all was dark:

And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,

When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,

When plundering herds assail their byke;

As open pussie's mortal foes,

When, pop! she starts before their nose;

As eager runs the market-crowd,

When, "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;

So Maggie runs, the witches follow,

Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!

In hell thy'll roast thee like a herrin!

In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!

Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!

Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,

And win the key-stane of the brig:

There at them thou thy tail may toss,

A running stream they darena cross.

But ere the key-stane she could make,

The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nanie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

P6-ANY-922

